

## Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 064178

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CONFIDENTIAL

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TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 519 - MARCH 13, 1978

PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY  
OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

1. ISRAEL. THE CABINET IS HOLDING A SPECIAL SESSION TO-  
DAY, QUITE LIKELY TO DETERMINE THE NATURE OF ISRAELI  
STRIKES AGAINST LEBANON IN RETALIATION FOR LAST WEEKEND'S

PALESTINIAN RAID. PALESTINIAN GROUPS IN LEBANON HAVE PLACED THEIR FORCES ON ALERT AND HAVE ORDERED THEIR UNITS TO DISPERSE IN ORDER NOT TO BE OBVIOUS ISRAELI TARGETS. THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT IS MOST CONCERNED. IT BELIEVES THAT ANYTHING THE ISRAELIS DID IN SOUTHERN LEBANON WOULD HAVE REPERCUSSIONS IN LEBANON AS A WHOLE. EMBASSY TEL AVIV COMMENTED THAT THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT BEGIN AND THE ISRAELI PUBLIC WILL INTERPRET US SILENCE ON RETALIATION AS TACIT US APPROVAL.

2. THE GREATEST IMPACT OF THE RAID APPEARS TO BE ON THE ISRAELIS THEMSELVES AND THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. WHILE IT IS TOO EARLY TO DETERMINE THE LONGER TERM EFFECT ON THE ISRAELI ATTITUDE, THERE HAS BEEN AN IMMEDIATE AND NEARLY UNIVERSAL HARDENING. BEGIN APPEARS ALREADY TO HAVE BEGUN STIFFENING HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD 242 AND ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE. IN HIS NEWS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY, BEGIN DECLARED IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS THAT NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION IS THE RIGHT OF NATIONS (ARABS), NOT FOR FRACTIONS OF NATIONS (PALESTINIANS), AND THAT "NO ADDITIONAL OUTRAGE WAS NECESSARY TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT A PALESTINIAN STATE WOULD BE A MORTAL DANGER TO OUR PEOPLE."

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3. IN A SIMILAR VEIN, WEIZMAN TIED THE ATTACK TO THE QUESTION OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK, SAYING THAT ISRAEL MUST MAINTAIN MILITARY AND SECURITY MEASURES THERE, "OR WE'LL HAVE TROUBLE NOT ONLY FROM LEBANON, BUT WE MIGHT HAVE TROUBLE FROM THE WEST BANK, AS WELL." ON AN EVEN MORE OMINOUS NOTE THE DEFENSE MINISTER SAID THAT THE ATTACK WILL HAVE TO BE REFLECTED IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT. THE MASS-CIRCULATION DAILY MAARIV COMMENTED THAT THE ATTACK CONFRONTED ISRAEL WITH "A TERRIBLE DILEMMA: IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE LONG-SOUGHT PEACE, WE FACE DEMANDS TO GIVE UP CONTROL OVER TERRITORIES WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE SECURITY OF CIVILIANS' LIVES. ANYONE WHO IS TRYING TO PUSH ISRAEL INTO SIGNING HOST AGREEMENTS THAT INCLUDE ONE-SIDED CONCESSIONS ... HAD BETTER UNDERSTAND THAT THE HEAVY PRICE WHICH WE ARE WILLING TO PAY FOR PEACE DOES NOT INCLUDE SUICIDE."

4. MOST IMPORTANTLY, EMBASSY TEL AVIV OBSERVED, THE ATTACK WILL TAKE MUCH OF THE WIND OUT OF THE SAILS OF THOSE ISRAELIS WHO WERE INCREASING THEIR OPPOSITION TO BEGIN'S INTERPRETATION OF 242. FOR EXAMPLE, MK ROM (HERUT) POINTED OUT THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE THIS WEEK FOR A GROUP OF RESERVISTS TO WRITE A CRITICAL LETTER TO BEGIN. THOSE WHO ARGUE THAT IT IS FUTILE TO TALK WITH THE PALESTINIANS WILL BE STRENGTHENED. IN ADDITION, THE BELIEF THAT THE ISRAELIS CAN RELY ON NO ONE BUT THEMSELVES FOR SECURITY WILL BE STRENGTHENED. A COMMON THEME IN THE ISRAELI PRESS IS THAT NOW THE US WILL BETTER UNDERSTAND

ISRAEL'S PREOCCUPATION WITH SECURITY.

5. NOT EVERYONE, ACCORDING TO OUR EMBASSY, IS MOVING TOWARD A HARDER LINE. SOME LOCAL OBSERVERS, A DISTINCT MINORITY, ARE SAYING THAT BEGIN SHOULD NOT USE THE ATTACK AS AN ARGUMENT FOR THE RETENTION OF THE TERRITORIES. SOME NOTE THAT THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THE TERRORIST ATTACKS  
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IS NOT GEOGRAPHIC, BUT FINDING A SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION. THEY OBSERVE THAT THE HEART OF ISRAEL, EVEN WHILE THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES ARE RETAINED, IS NOT SAFE. NEVERTHELESS, IN THE EMOTION OF THE MOMENT SUCH ARGUMENTS APPEAL TO FEW ISRAELIS. (CONFIDENTIAL)

6. JORDAN. EMBASSY AMMAN HAS OBSERVED THAT THE JORDANIAN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE POSITION ON THE MIDEAST DISPUTE IS HARDENING IN RESPONSE TO A PERCEIVED HARDENING OF THE ISRAELI STANCE. AT THIS JUNCTURE, JORDANIAN VIEWS ARE SHAPED BY SEVERAL FACTORS, INCLUDING:

(A) A GROWING PERCEPTION THAT THE SADAT INITIATIVE HAS FAILED;

(B) A FEELING THAT BEGIN'S INTERPRETATION OF 242 CONFIRMS THEIR SUSPICIONS OF HIM;

(C) UNCERTAINTY OF SAUDI ATTITUDES;

(D) AN UNWILLINGNESS TO ENTER NEGOTIATIONS UNLESS TANGIBLE PROGRESS TOWARD AN OVERALL PEACE IS ASSURED; AND

(E) THE BELIEF THAT THE US HAS NOT YET DEMONSTRATED A WILLINGNESS TO PRESSURE ISRAEL. (CONFIDENTIAL)

7. ARAB LEAGUE-PLO. AN ARAB LEAGUE OFFICIAL TOLD EMBASSY CAIRO THAT AN AGENDA ITEM REGARDING THE PLO FOR THE LEAGUE'S SCHEDULED MARCH 27 SESSION IS AIMED AT HAVING AN ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION TRAVEL TO THE US WITH THE PURPOSE OF PERSUADING THE US TO RECOGNIZE THE PLO. THE DELEGATION WOULD STRESS THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE PLO.  
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THE OFFICIAL BELIEVES THAT THE ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL WILL APPROVE THE ITEM. (CONFIDENTIAL)

8. PLO-USSR. SHARED SOVIET AND PLO OPPOSITION TO THE CURRENT NEGOTIATING PROCESS AND THEIR INTEREST IN BOLSTERING SADAT'S OPPONENTS EVIDENTLY HAVE LED TO A STRENGTHEN-

ING OF SOVIET-PLO RELATIONS. DESPITE PLEDGES OF CLOSE COOPERATION ON ARAB-ISRAELI MATTERS, HOWEVER, LONGSTANDING DIFFERENCES OVER THE MODALITIES OF THE PEACE PROCESS SEEM TO HAVE BEEN SHELVED RATHER THAN RESOLVED.

9. ACCORDING TO TASS REPORTS ON ARAFAT'S TALKS WITH GROMYKO AND BREZHNEV ON MARCH 8-9, THE TWO SIDES AFFIRMED SUPPORT FOR A COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT, BUT CONDEMNED EGYPT'S "CAPITULATORY" ACTIONS; MOREOVER, THEY BLAMED "IMPERIALISM" AND "ARAB REACTIONARIES" FOR AGGRAVATING THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. AT THE SAME TIME, TASS SAID THAT THE PARTIES STRESSED THE NEED FOR UNITY AMONG "PROGRESSIVE" ARABS AND THE "SOCIALIST COMMUNITY" AND REPORTED THAT ARAFAT AND GROMYKO PLEDGED TO KEEP IN REGULAR CONTACT ON MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST. ALONG

SIMILAR LINES, TASS ALSO REPORTED THAT ARAFAT AND BREZHNEV NOTED THE "POSITIVE ROLE" PLAYED BY THE TRIPOLI AND ALGIERS SUMMITS IN ADVANCING THE UNITY OF "PROGRESSIVE" ARABS. IN KEEPING WITH MOSCOW'S EARLIER PUBLIC POSITIONS, HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO REFERENCE TO A SOVIET ENDORSEMENT OF THE SPECIFIC RESULTS OF THOSE MEETINGS.

10. ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE, THE SOVIETS SEEM TO HAVE HELD CLOSELY TO THE POSITIONS AGREED ON DURING ASSAD'S RECENT VISIT. GROMYKO HAD REAFFIRMED MOSCOW'S SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION, CREATION OF A STATE OF THEIR OWN, AND THEIR RETURN TO THEIR HOMES "IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXISTING UN RESOLUTIONS." BREZHNEV TOOK THE SAME LINE ON SETTLEMENT TERMS BUT ADDED AN UNUSUALLY STRONG CONFIDENTIAL

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POLITICAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE PLO AS THE "HEAD" OF THE PALESTINIAN STRUGGLE AND ONE OF THE "LEADING DETACHMENTS" OF THE ARAB NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT. HOWEVER, HE DID NOT REFER TO THE PLO AS THE SOLE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIANS.

11. ARAFAT RECIPROCATED SIGNS OF SOVIET SUPPORT BY PRAISING THE USSR AS A FRIEND OF THE PALESTINIANS, EXPRESSING GRATITUDE FOR CONSISTENT AND "ALL-ROUND" SOVIET BACKING FOR THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE, AND CALLING FOR CONSOLIDATION OF PLO-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP ONE OF THE PLO'S MAIN TASKS. HOWEVER, IN A TASS INTERVIEW ON MARCH 9, ARAFAT ALSO REAFFIRMED THE PLO'S UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT UNSC RESOLUTION 338 IN ITS PRESENT FORM, AND HE OFFERED NO SUGGESTION THAT THE PLO WAS PREPARED TO JOIN THE GENEVA TALKS UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS. MOREOVER, HE POINTEDLY REMINDED THE SOVIETS THAT, AS CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AND A "TRUSTEE" OF THE "INTERNATIONAL EQUATION" THAT PRODUCED RESOLUTION 338, THE USSR IS PLAYING THE ROLE OF "ONE WHO PRESERVES THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN

PEOPLE." HE THUS CLEAR ENDORSED MOSCOW'S CONTINUED PERFORMANCE OF THAT ROLE, WHILE REMINDING THE SOVIETS OF THEIR EARLIER PLEDGES NOT TO TAKE PART IN THE GENEVA TALKS WITHOUT THE PLO OR PLO-APPROVED PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES.

12. ON THE MATTER OF ADDITIONAL SOVIET MILITARY SUPPORT FOR THE PLO, THERE IS LITTLE INFORMATION. ARAFAT'S PORTRAYAL OF HIS TALKS WITH GROMYKO AS "SUCCESSFUL AND FRUITFUL," TOGETHER WITH HIS PRAISE OF MOSCOW'S "ALL-ROUND" SUPPORT (A FORMULA FREQUENTLY USED BY THE SOVIETS TO DENOTE MILITARY ASSISTANCE), AT A MINIMUM SUGGESTS PLO SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT SOVIET PERFORMANCE IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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MILITARY AID FIELD. (CONFIDENTIAL)

13. WEST BANK. OUR CONSULATE GENERAL REPORTS THAT A RELIABLE SOURCE STATED THAT THE ARAB DIRECTOR OF WEST BANK HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT WAS FORCED TO RESIGN BY THE PLO. WEST BANKERS BELIEVE THAT THE PLO CARRIES A BIG STICK, AND THE PLO IS LIKELY TO BE FAIRLY SUCCESSFUL IN PROHIBITING POLITICAL ACTIVITY WHICH IT CONSIDERS INIMICAL TO ITS INTERESTS. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN THE RAMALLAH AREA.

14. THE CONSULATE GENERAL ALSO NOTED THAT THERE ARE NOW ABOUT 6,500 ISRAELIS IN THE 47 SETTLEMENTS ACROSS THE 1949 ARMISTICE LINE ON THE WEST BANK. FOUR ADDITIONAL SETTLEMENTS ARE CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION. DURING ITS TENURE, THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT HAS INITIATED OR ALLOWED SETTLEMENT OR QUASI-SETTLEMENT AT FOURTEEN SITES ON THE WEST BANK AND TWO IN THE FORMER NO-MAN'S LAND. MOREOVER, THREE EXISTING UNAUTHORIZED SETTLEMENTS HAVE BEEN LEGITIMIZED. WITHIN THE PAST SIX MONTHS, THE LIKUD GOVERNMENT HAS ALLOWED THE INITIATION OF 12 NEW SITES ON THE WEST BANK. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

15. MOROCCO. THE USSR HAS SIGNED AN AGREEMENT WITH MOROCCO TO PROVIDE \$2 BILLION IN 20-YEAR CREDITS TO HELP DEVELOP MOROCCO'S MESKALA PHOSPHATE DEPOSITS. THE SOVIETS WILL RECEIVE 10 MILLION TONS OF PHOSPHATE ROCK ANNUALLY FOR 30 YEARS IN REPAYMENT FOR THE CREDITS AND IN EXCHANGE FOR SOVIET GOODS. THE AGREEMENT WILL BE REVIEWED EVERY FIVE YEARS. THE TOTAL VALUE OF TRADE AND CREDIT TRANSACTIONS COULD EVENTUALLY RISE TO \$10 BILLION. NEGOTIATIONS ON THE MESKALA PROJECT DRAGGED ON FOR FOUR YEARS.

16. MOROCCO AND THE USSR SIGNED AN AGREEMENT IN FEBRUARY ON FISHERIES AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF NEGOTIATION IN RETURN FOR ACCESS TO MOROCCAN WATERS THE SOVIETS WILL PROVIDE CONFIDENTIAL

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MOROCCO WITH FISHING TRAWLERS, AID IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF  
A FISH PROCESSING CENTER, AND TRAIN MOROCCAN PERSONNEL.  
(CONFIDENTIAL) VANCE

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